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ABSTRACT

This review of the literature on effects attributable to the sex variable in counselor-client interactions is designed to identify situational and contextual factors which may be detrimental in establishing and maintaining the counselor-client relationship as well as provide understanding and assistance in alleviating attitudinal and behavioral dispositions on the part of both counselors and clients. The materials reviewed address the following areas of concern: (1) differences in male and female behavior; (2) sex role stereotypes; (3) sex bias effects due to stereotypes held by counselors and clients; and (4) the effects of sex bias on vocational counseling. A comprehensive bibliography is also provided. (Author/HLM)

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EFFECTS ATTRIBUTABLE TO

COUNSELOR - CLIENT SEX DIFFERENCES

Perspectives On Sex-Fair Counseling

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Effects Attributable To Counselor - Client Sex Differences

A sizeable amount of research has been conducted in recent years in efforts to determine the nature and extent of various effects due to the sex variable in counselor - client interactions. Certainly, this issue warrants the attention of all individuals in the helping professions, in order that we might (1) identify situational and contextual factors which may be detrimental in establishing and maintaining effective counseling relationships, and (2) understand and attempt to alleviate attitudinal and behavioral dispositions on the part of both counselors and clients which confound the helping process.

The following discussion will comprise a comprehensive review of the literature on effects attributable to the sex variable in counselor - client interactions. Following a consideration of differences in male and female behavior which form the basis of sex role stereotypes in our society, research findings from studies of client and counselor reactions as a function of sex differences will be reviewed. Sex bias effects due to various sexual stereotypes of counselors and clients will be discussed, with implications for vocational - career choice counseling emphasized. Recommendations for counselor training are offered in view of the research findings.

Sex Differences and Sex Role Stereotypes

In our society, certain differences may be observed between the typical personality characteristics of the two sexes. Sex differences in personality are generally believed to result from differences in the way boys and girls are raised. Among the many well established findings in the sex difference literature are the following:

- Males are typically more aggressive than females (Hutt, 1972; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974).
- Verbal abilities mature more rapidly in females than in males, and during late childhood and early adolescence, females are superior on a variety of verbal measures (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974).

- Females are viewed as being more interpersonally oriented than males (Heilbrun, 1976; Hutt, 1972; Peevers & Secord, 1973).
- Females express more positive attitudes than males toward other people in general and individuals with personal problems in particular (Gurwitz & Dodge, 1975; Haccoun, Allen & Fader, 1976).
- Boys recieve more negative feedback than girls from peers as well as from teachers (Dweck, 1976; Shortell and Biller, 1970).

Females are socialized to be nurturant, and to either behave non-aggressively or to suppress aggressive impulses when they do arise; the opposite pattern is usually found in men (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974). The sex role literature indicates that men are percieved as more dominant, practical, and decisive than women (Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson & Rosenkrantz, 1972; Heilbrun, 1976). Such stereotypically masculine traits are often considered more socially desirable than are attributes which are stereotypically feminine. Thus, a female may not be labeled as healthy unless she displays a set of behaviors characterized by dependency and passivity.

The existence of highly concensual norms and beliefs about such different characteristics of men and women may be said to account for sexual stereotypy in our society (Fernberger, 1948; Komarsky, 1950; Rosenkrantz, Vogel, Bee, Broverman & Broverman, 1968) and the differential valuations of behaviors and characteristics typically ascribed to men and women are well established (Lynn, 1959; McKee & Sherriffs, 1959; Rosenkrantz et al., 1968). Broverman et al. (1972) noted that the positive value of sex role standards has rarely been questioned. Goldberg (1972), after performing an extensive series of empirical studies dealing with prejudice toward women, concluded that bias against females is a "cultural trait".

Past research has shown that sexual stereotyping exerts a strong influence on American life, as evidenced by aspiration levels in controlled experimental settings (Ryan & Pryor, 1976), aspiration levels in classroom settings (Sumner & Johnson, 1949), and personnel decisions related to employment, promotion, and professional growth (Rosen & Jardee, 1973, 1974). Women in the United States may indeed be faced with

deadset social obstacles to self-actualization. The fact that women are concentrated in the less rewarding, lower paying occupations that provide few chances for advancement (U.S. Department of Labor, 1973) reflects this contention. Contrary to popular belief, women, like men, worry about failure; however, women are more likely to be anxious about success because success is considered "unfeminine" (Horner, 1972).

In general, females are seen as incorporating more negatively valued traits into their self-concepts (Rosenkrantz, et al., 1968), and one might anticipate more difficulty in adjustment on the part of women. Negatively valued traits such as dependency, passivity, submissiveness and difficulty making decisions suggest that women are more prone to problems for which they may seek help. However, Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend's (1965, 1967) research results indicated that males and females are equally vulnerable to psychological problems. The ways in which males and females react to life problems may differ, though - women have a tendency to become depressed, nervous, or emotional whereas men turn more to alcohol or engage in aggressive or some other form of antisocial behavior (Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend, 1967).

Male and female clients do present different problems in counseling situations (Chesler, 1971; Howard, Orlinsky & Hill, 1970) and are viewed differently by counselors (Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz & Vogel, 1970). Survey results verify that although males and females do present differing problems, they seek counseling in equal numbers, and are admitted to inpatient treatment facilities in approximately equal numbers. Cannon and Redick (1973) reported that during 1970 for every 100 women admitted to psychiatric facilities in the United States, 104 men were admitted. For college-age adults (18-24 years) the ratio was 99 males per 100 females.

Counselors recieve the same sex role socialization as do their clients, and may consciously or unconsciously be susceptible to stereotypical assumptions prevalent in the society at-large. Schlossberg and Pietrofesa (1973) found that counselors in training exhibit the norms of society and appear to be neither better nor worse than

other people with respect to bias against females. Mental health professionals are as susceptible as others to stereotyping and may reinforce it in their clients (Barrett, Berg, & Eaton, 1974; Miller & Mothner, 1971; Rice & Rice, 1973). Koontz (1970) and Cooperman (1971) have both stated that counselor attitudes toward women are crucial considerations in the delivery of effective guidance services.

Tyler (1969) has noted that both counselors and counselees hold "general attitudes toward broad categories of people", the most obvious classification being that of gender. Individuals enter into the counseling interaction with certain attitudes concerning men and women in general and with concepts or feelings about their own maleness and femaleness - at the time of encounter, these attitudes or concepts or feelings may come into play, subtly or obviously, to enhance or hamper the interaction. The report of a recent American Psychological Association Task Force (1975) concerning how counselors' sex role attitudes effect the process of counseling suggested that the value systems of counselors themselves are central to the problem of sex bias in counseling. Certainly this issue demands the attention of all individuals in the helping professions. A review of the research on client reactions and therapist reactions as related to the sex variable in counseling may serve to delineate those situational and contextual, as well as personal, factors which influence the effects attributable to sex bias and stereotyping.

Research on Client Reactions

The sex, professional stature and attractiveness of the counselor are important variables which may influence client preferences from the outset of counseling. Simons (1976) showed pictures of counselors who differed in sex and age to male and female college students and had them indicate their impressions of the counselor's credibility. There was same-sex counselor preference on overall impressions of the counselor as a person and as the subject's own counselor. Increasing age was considered enhancing for male counselors and of detrimental value for female counselors.

The therapist's professional stature and orientation may interact with the sex of the counselor to effect clients' perceptions of counselor credibility, as demonstrated by Bloom, Weigel and Trautt (1977). The counselor's physical attractiveness has also been shown to be a powerful component of the counselor - client interaction, with subjects' overall impressions of physically attractive counselors being significantly more favorable than those of an unattractive counselor, with both male (Cash, Begley, McCown & Weise, 1975) and female (Lewis & Walsh, 1978) counselor models.

In the majority of studies investigating sex pairing, a stated preference for male over female counselors has been found. Fuller (1963) conducted a survey of preferences of college clients regarding counselor sex, and a study of client - counselor interaction in counseling with amount of verbalized feeling as the dependent variable. Male students were found to almost exclusively prefer male counselors, with only 1% of the males stating a preference for female counselors; female clients also preferred male counselors more often than female counselors, though more female clients stated "no preference" of counselor sex as compared to the male clients. Clients who had no preference regarding counselor sex expressed more feeling in counseling than clients who preferred male counselors. However, Fuller noted that more feeling was expressed in pairs including a female, regardless of whether the female was a client or a counselor, and that feeling increased more from intake to counseling in such pairs than in all-male pairs.

Fuller (1964), in an investigation of college students' stated preferences for male or female counselors, administered pre-counseling questionnaires to 534 non-clients (388 males, 146 females) from a university reading program, and to 588 self-referred clients (414 males, 174 females) from a university counseling center. Male non-clients preferred male counselors more frequently, as did the male clients, while female non-clients and clients also stated preferences for female counselors less frequently. Subjects of both sexes who preferred female counselors

before counseling were more likely to change preference after counseling than were clients who had preferred male counselors.

Boulware and Holmes (1970) found that their subjects of both sexes expected male therapists to be more knowledgeable, more experienced, and better adjusted, and that these assumptions apparently formed the basis for their stated preferences.

More recent sex preference research suggests that such notions about the superior competence of male professionals may be disappearing. Walker and Stake (1978) conducted a survey of counselor preferences among both male and female clients and non-clients to test for possible changes in avowed preference since the time of the Fuller (1964) and Boulware and Holmes (1970) studies. Although, as expected, more clients than non-clients expressed preferences, results from both groups indicated a decrease in male counselor preferences.

Simons and Helms (1976) investigated women's preferences for counselors differing in sex, marital status and age. Both college and noncollege women preferred female counselors, and an age preference emerged as well - college women preferred female counselors in the 35 - 45 and 55 - 65 age ranges, while noncollege women preferred the oldest group (55 - 65). Both groups anticipated that women counselors would be superior to men counselors in all areas measured.

Howard, Orlinsky and Hill (1970) conducted a survey of female clients' reported satisfaction in psychotherapy as a function of various patient-therapist pairings. Their results indicated that the clients appeared to have had a rewarding experience if (a) the therapists embodied a successful life adaptation in a situation similar to their own - suggesting a modelling or identification effect, (b)if the therapy relationship held potential for satisfying their current life needs - perhaps a function of fantasied or wished-for need fulfillment, (c) if the therapist maintained a detachment from the patients' problems, and (d) if their current life status was one which the therapists had reason to admire or respect - showing the effects of the

therapists' positive regard.

The sex pairing of the counselor and client may affect the nature and extent of client reactions in the course of counseling. Sex of the counselor is believed to affect clients' frankness, honesty and enjoyment of an interview, especially when discussing sensitive matters. Casciani (1978) found that white male and female college students disclosed at greater depths and for longer durations after observing counselor models of the same sex. Whalen and Flowers (1977), in a study of college students' levels of interpretation after viewing male or female stimuli in videotaped counseling sessions of same and opposite-sex pairings, found that more interpretation was offered by subjects when same-sex pairings were viewed.

Research on Counselor Reactions

In a landmark study of the relationships between sex of the person evaluated and clinical judgements of mental health, Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz and Vogel (1970) tested the hypothesis that clinicians' judgements of the traits characterizing "healthy, mature individuals"would differ as a function of the sex of the person judged. A sex role stereotype questionnaire consisting of 122 bipolar items which reflected stereotypical male vs. female traits (e.g., "Very aggressive - Not at all Aggressive"; "Doesn't hide emotions at all - Always hides emotions") based on a similar instrument developed by Rosenkrantz et al. (1968) was administered to 79 clinically trained psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers (46 men, 33 women) of varying ages (23 - 55) and with differing amounts of professional experience (from graduate internship students to private practicioners). Subjects were given one of three types of instructions: to think about and describe a healthy, mature, socially competent (a) adult, sex unspecified, (b) man, or (c) woman. Results indicated that both male and female professionals judged the characteristics of "healthy" persons on the basis of the presence or absence of socially desirable behaviors reflecting sex role stereotypes. Broverman and his associates also found

that a "normal, healthy adult", sex unspecified, was described by both male and female clinicians as being similar to the profile of a normal, healthy male, but that neither the adult nor male profiles were similar to the profile of a female. Thus, these actively functioning clinicians held different standards of mental health for males and females. In 1972, Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson and Rosenkrantz replicated the study using a different population and found that "concensus about the differing characteristics of men and women exist across groups differing in sex, age, marital status and education" (p. 59).

In a comprehensive study of counselor reactions to female clients, Hill, Tanney, Leonard and Reiss (1977) investigated the effects of female clients' problems, ages, and the sex of counselors on five dependent measures: empathy ratings, counselor estimates of problem severity, counselor ratings of ability to profit from counseling, attractiveness, and number of sessions needed. Results indicated that (a) personal - social problems were rated as more serious than the vocational problems on all dependent measures; (b) the two vocational problems did not produce differing effects on any of the dependent measures; and (c) client age and counselor sex produced differing effects, depending upon the particular problem.

Helms (1978) replicated in part the Hill et al. (1977) study and found that counselors in analogue settings tended to evaluate problem importance in a manner similar to counselors in naturalistic settings.

Counselors may percieve clients as more in need of services when the client's concern involves the sex role stereotypically expected of that client, as found by Stewart (1977). Johnson (1978) studied the extent to which male and female counselors' responses were affected by their gender when clients on videotapes exhibited gender-appropriate (i.e., depression in females, anger in males) emotions. She discovered a number of stereotypic relationships existing - for example, angry females

were rated as being "more angry" than males who expressed the same degree of anger. Hayes and Wolleat (1978) had graduate student trainees rate an audiotaped counseling interview which was read to half of them by a male and to half by a female. Their results indicated a tendency for all trainees to rate opposite-sexed clients as more deviant from cultural sex role stereotypes.

Interestingly enough, Barocas and Vance (1974) found that regardless of the sex of the counselor or client, the more attractive a client was to a counselor the more likely it was that the counselor would state a prognosis of favorable outcome for the client.

In real-life counseling interviews, male and female counselors may consciously or unconsciously use different counseling behaviors with male and female clients. Male and female counselors using the same counseling behaviors may be percieved in a similar manner (Hoffman & Spencer, 1977). It may be stated that a specific sex pairing of client and counselor may be more effective in one situation while the opposite pairing may be more effective in another situation. Hoffman-Graff (1977) found no significant effects in the counseling process due to interviewer - subject pairing and also concluded that male and female interviewers engaging in the same counseling behavior may not be percieved differentially. The question of whether female counselors react differently than male counselors or whether female clients react differently than male clients in various counseling situations requires further investigation.

The Counseling Process: Empathy and Self-Disclosure

Such variables as client self-exploration, self-disclosure and experiencing have been considered important to both the process and outcome of counseling (Carkhuff, 1969; Carkhuff & Berenson, 1967; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967). Undoubtedly, clients differ in their initial efforts to reveal themselves, but little is known about the variables which influence these differences in the counseling relationship. Research suggests

that the sex of the client and the sex of the therapist may be relevant.

Studies on the relationships between counselor - client sex pairings and levels of expressed feeling and empathic judgement have yielded a number of interesting results. Cartwright and Lerner (1963) reported that mixed-sex dyads displayed less empathy at the beginning of counseling than same-sex dyads, but that by the end of counseling there was no difference in levels of expressed empathy between the dyads. Hill (1975) found that same-sex pairings of clients and counselors had more discussion of feelings by both the counselors and the clients.

Breisinger (1976) attempted to replicate Olesker and Balter's (1972) study, and found that for graduate student trainees of both sexes there were no significant differences in empathic abilities, whether judging members of the same or the other sex. Since Breisinger's subjects were graduate students in counselor education who would be expected to do well in a test designed to measure empathy, the author speculated that possible relationships between sex and empathy disappear "when the person making empathic judgements has recieved training in those skills necessary for counseling" (p. 290).

Petro and Hansen (1977) showed videotapes of male and female clients to practicing counselors of both sexes, who then responded to a multiple-choice instrument on the affective status of males and females on the screen. Male and female counselors tended to be equally accurate in their empathic judgements.

Stewart (1977) found that under most counseling conditions, female counselors seemed to communicate essentially the same levels of empathy as male counselors.

Self-disclosure, another important component of the counselor - client interaction, may be broadly defined as any information about himself that Person A communicates to Person B. Certainly the identification of dispositional and contextual variables that either inhibit or promote self-disclosure would be valuable to the professional counselor. However, the research regarding effects of client and

counselor sex on self-disclosure is contradictory and inconclusive. Janofsky (1971), in an analogue setting, found that females disclosed more than males. Vondracek (1970) found men to be more disclosing than women, while Jourard and Friedman (1970) obtained mixed results.

Lomranz and Shapira (1974) reported that female clients emmitted more self-disclosing responses on a paper-and-pencil questionnaire measure than did males. Brooks (1974) rated college students' self-disclosures in interviews with either male or female counselors, and found that (a) males disclosed more to females, while females disclosed more to males, and that (b) dyads containing a female resulted in more disclosure than all-male dyads. Kohen (1975) has maintained that there are no differences between men and women in abilities to self-disclose.

Other studies that have investigated the effects of the personal characteristics of a self-disclosing model on subjects' own disclosures have yielded conflicting results. In some studies, the model's sex was not a significant factor (Chelune, 1976; Hoffman-Graff, 1977), and in others the model's sex was a significant factor (Annis & Perry, 1977; Brooks, 1974). Highlen and Gillis (1978), in a recent study of the effects of situational factors, sex and attitude on affective self-disclosure, concluded that affective self-disclosure is a complex variable which seems to be sex-linked and situation-specific.

Prevalence of Sex Bias In Counseling

As noted earlier, sex role bias and prejudicial treatment of male and female clients by counselors is of increasing concern to both practicioners and researchers (American Psychological Association, 1975). Although much of the literature emphasizes the harmful effects of sexism in relation to women, Price and Borgers (1977) remind us that sexual biases in our society limit the potential of all people, both males and females.

Two recent studies offer evidence of the continuing prevalence of sexual stereo-

typing in relation to counseling processes:

Ginn (1975) surveyed male and female undergraduates in an attempt to determine their assumptions as to what kinds of problems men and women would present in counseling situations. Out of 75 problems on a problem check list, 35 were seen as being "typically female", while only 16 were viewed as being "typically male". Not only were men seen as being more likely to have fewer problems, but the nature of the problems ascribed to males were different. Of the 16 estimated in the male direction, 8 were vocational - educational concerns dealing with succeeding in college and with postcollege plans; other problems which were seen as being more typically male were those which are usually attributed to males: alcohol, drugs, sex and anger. The problems seen as typically female were mostly concerned with physical complaints, emotionality and relationships; none of the 'female' problems were vocational - educational in nature. In the same study, files of 250 active clients (110 males, 140 females) at the university counseling center were studied, and sex differences as defined by the same 75-item scale were found for only three problems.

Lesser (1976) distributed inventories of feminine and masculine values and three fictitious case histories to male and female counselors in New York State. The inventory responses indicated that most counselors held generally positive attitudes regarding the role of women - but in interpretting the cases they tended to revert to more conventional attitudes that favor men. She concluded that counselors were aware of the women's movement and desired to be fair to both sexes, but that many of them were unable to alter prejudicial practices in particular situations.

Englehard, Jones and Stiggins (1976) reported evidence of an encouraging trend toward liberalization of sexual stereotypy among professional counselors. To chart attitude changes that have accompanied increasing career development interests on the part of women, male and female counselors' attitudes regarding women were

measured three times over a span of six years in the State of Minnesota - in 1968 (Englehard, 1969), in 1971 (Otto, 1973) and again in 1974 (Englehard, Jones & Stiggins, 1976). Counselors were asked to indicate their attitudes regarding (a) the dual role of mother and worker, (b) perceptions of sex role definitions, and (c) expectations regarding the societal impact of women. Changes from 1968 through 1971 to 1974 suggest a growing acceptance of the dual role, and the fact that women were expected to make a significant contribution to society. By 1974, unnecessarily restrictive sex role definitions were no longer considered appropriate by either male or female counselors. Surprisingly, males appeared to be paralleling female growth (emergence) and awareness in terms of changing sex role standards.

Tanney and Birk (1976) reviewed the literature on sex bias in career counseling and concluded that "sex bias frequently occurs in career counseling . . . the bias, however, seems to be operative in both male and female counselors" (p. 31). Mitchack's (1978) comprehensive study of occupational sex role stereotypes among counselor trainees confirmed that both sexes held stronger, more gender-directional sex role stereotypes for some occupations than for others - suggesting that both male and female counselor trainees held similar kinds of preconceptions about the sex appropriateness of occupations. Hawley (1971) concluded that much of existing career theory does not apply to women and that vocational counseling for high school girls is often based on borrowed theory or stereotypes.

Frank and Kirk (1975) examined the differences between male and female college counselees' and noncounselees' sex-appropriateness in career interests, and found that few inconsistencies existed among the men. Among the women, however, they found that female counselees had more cross-sex interests (engineer, dentist, laboratory technician, math-science teacher) than noncounselees. Frank and Kirk speculated that the counselees' nontraditional interests motivated them to seek vocational guidance.

Lunnenborg and Gerry (1977) compared extensive profiles of male and female college counselees with the "Men In General" and "Women In General" samples of the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory on all 153 General Themes, Basic Interest and Occupational scales. Their results revealed that college females differed little from 'women in general', and that college males were more interested in artistic areas of work and significantly less interested in realistic and enterprising areas than were 'men in general'.

Pringle (1973) found that male counselors were generally more supportive of high achievement in female clients than were female counselors, but that male counselors were also supportive of behaviors reflecting dependence among both male and female clients. Fridersdorf (1969) found that male counselors held more traditionally restrictive vocational expectations for girls than did female counselors. Thomas and Steward (1971) also studied male counselors' responses to high school girls who presented vocational choice problems. They found that counselors who were told that the girl preferred a traditionally feminine career rated her career choice as more appropriate and recommended further counseling less often than did counselors who were told that the girl had a more deviant (nontraditional) goal of engineering. Donahue and Costar (1977) devised six short case studies describing either a male or a female student and asked 300 high school counselors of both sexes to select an appropriate occupation for each sample subject. When the case study was said to describe a female, counselors consistently chose occupations that paid less, required less educational preparation, and were more closely supervised than when the same case study described a male. Female counselors over the age of 40 exhibited the strongest tendencies toward this.

In summary, it may be stated that counselors of both sexes must strive to be flexible and open-minded in the course of counseling - especially in view of the changing nature of "sex appropriate" attitudes, interests and behaviors in our

society. In regards to women in our society, counselors should be aware of the many demographic and social changes which have come about during the last decade: that both the percentage of unmarried women and the average age of women at the time of marriage are climbing, that the birth rate is lower than in years past, that women are pursuing graduate education in increasing numbers, and that the proportion of women in the labor force continues to grow.

One of the strongest reactionary movements in the helping professions has come about partly as a result of the percieved preponderance of sex bias and stereotyping in the profession - the movement known as feminist counseling. Based on the premise that female counselors are better able to understand and empathize with female clients than are male counselors, feminist counseling has become increasingly popular for the treatment of problems of adjustment which are viewed as exclusive to women. In fact, many feminist counselors have advocated the exclusive use of female counselors with female clients (e.g., Barrett, Berg & Eaton, 1974; Chesler, 1971; Westervelt, 1973) on the basis that women clients have problems that are unique to women. Carter (1971) has suggested that female counselors are better equipped as therapists because they have been raised to be understanding and nurturant. Some authors, notably Carter (1971) and Chesler (1972), have further stated that male therapists discourage self-actualization of females. However, Stricker (1977) has noted that feminist counseling theorists have advocated same-sex counselors for female clients largely on the basis of analogue studies. Stricker questions whether it is proper to assume that the findings of analogue studies actually reflect the state of counseling recieved by women.

Pringle (1971) has suggested that the counselor, whether male or female, who is truly supportive of women must "(1) recognize the changing roles of women in American society; (2) recognize and evaluate his/her own sex role biases; and (3) develop some level of expertise with the growing body of recent research on sex

differences and on the psychology of women" (pp. 13 - 14).

Perspectives on Sex-Fair Counseling

In light of the aforementioned research findings, it seems reasonable to suspect that among both male and female therapists and among both male and female clients, there may be identifiable kinds of therapists and clients who sex role stereotype more than others. It has been found that an array of situational and contextual factors may influence the perceptions of clients by counselors (and vice versa), and that this may confound the processes necessary to the success of the counseling relationship. The type of problem presented in the interview (i.e., personal - social vs. vocational - educational) may determine how the counselor or client responds due to the sex of one or the other participant, and should perhaps be taken into consideration in the choosing of counselor - client pairings.

It may be possible to construct a model for matching client and counselor in order to facilitate sex fairness and maximize therapeutic potential. Considerable effort has gone into exploring personality characteristics related to the A - B therapist distinction - and it has been shown that traits associated with A - B therapist status have at least some overlap with stereotypic masculine and feminine characteristics (Delk & Ryan, 1975). In accordance with the stated needs of prospective clients, matching of counselor and client could be done according to the similarities between the two (in terms of A - B status and sex role stereotyping) or according to the differences between the two, if reconstructive therapy is the objective. Sex of the client and counselor, diagnosis of the client, and other variables might be considered depending on the results from other assessment devices.

A counselor profile designed to ascertain whether or not an aspiring counselor is likely to be be discriminatory toward certain people based on sex, age and/or race might be developed to assist counselor educators and employers. A similar

self-administered test could also be developed so that counselors may examine themselves and determine if they are inclined to be biased toward others on the basis of their own attitudes or beliefs.

One approach in the training of counselors might be to pair beginning counselors with clients of the same sex and, after gaining some experience, allow them to work with clients of the opposite sex. Also,role reversal techniques could be employed to help trainees experience the feelings of the opposite sex.

Gilbert and Waldroop (1978) evaluated the effectiveness of various procedures used for increasing sex-fairness in counseling, and found that role-playing exercises aimed at alleviating traditional sex role stereotyping and bias had positive effects on three dependent measures of attitude, (a) fostering more liberal attitudes toward women's roles, (b) engendering greater sensitivity to sex bias, and (c) helping to form more positive clinical evaluations of clients as a result.

It is most important that counselors examine their own attitudes and constantly strive to avoid the pitfalls of sexual bias in their own work. For the good of all concerned, training programs to educate counselors in this area should be developed in accordance with the American Psychological Association Task Force (1975) recommendations. Perhaps the aforementioned approaches and other might be incorporated into graduate training programs in efforts to facilitate sex-fair counseling in the future.

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